

**Welcome
Back**



You will be welcoming children back into your setting after an extended break. Some children and their carers may find this a challenging time and may be feeling anxious.

Below are some suggestions about the things you might want to consider and practical activities that may help you to support your children and their families.

Revisit positive settling-in practices in order to rebuild relationships and minimise the impact of separation anxiety. Penny Tassoni gives very good advice on this in her books *Understanding Children's Behaviour* and *Getting it Right for Two Year Olds*.



- Children will need support to get to know the environment again.
- Children will need support to remember your routines and boundaries.
- Children will not have seen their friends and may initially find positive interactions a challenge. You will need to model and teach playing alongside, turn taking and sharing.
- Children will need specific activities to rebuild their confidence in a group environment.
- Children will need ways to express their range of emotions safely.
- Children may need support to feel physically and emotionally safe.



When children...

- Feel at ease
- Act spontaneously
- Are open to ideas
- Feel relaxed
- Show confidence and self-esteem
- Are in touch with own feelings and emotions
- Enjoy life and show vitality

This is when we know their mental health is secured



Settling-in-Teddy in the Bag

Put a teddy and 2 other objects in a bag. Invite your key-child to look in and explore the bag when they enter in the morning. Include their carer. They can take the teddy to cuddle. You could also use bubbles, ball games and puppets to establish the bond with your children and families.

<https://www.parentclub.scot/articles/play-talk-read>

<https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/.../>

homelearningandtimetogetherhomepage.asp



Self-Confidence - Show and Tell

Show and tell the classroom **1**. To help children to familiarise themselves with the setting, walk the children around the class to each area of your room and talk about what we can do in each area. For example “This is the creative area. We can paint, cut and stick. When we are in this area we put on our apron to help us from getting our clothes messy.” Ask the children what else we can do in this area?

Show and tell the classroom **2**. Sit in a circle take turns asking the children to find an object from a different area of the room e.g. “Polly please could you go and find me a sheep.” You may need to give them a clue where to find the object.

<https://ican.org.uk/>



Emotional well-being - Find our friends

Find our friends. Use two cards or objects that are the same colour. Give one to each child. Then ask them to find their friend with the matching colour. Whose shoe is this? Ask children to take off one shoe and put it in the middle. Then ask the children to pick one shoe, but not their own. The children then have to find child that the shoe belongs to.



Self- esteem - Hello Lotto

Ask your families for photographs or use photos that you have taken of the children’s faces. You will need 2 identical photographs. Make a lotto board with the photos. You could use your key group children on one lotto board. The children then match their faces. You could extend this by taking photos of the children showing different emotions.

<https://www.earlylearninghq.org.uk/earlylearninghq-blog/the-leuven-well-being-and-involvement-scales/>



Self-confidence and Self-respect

Giving children responsibility helps them to feel important, trusted and capable. This could be laying the table for snack, making the snack, sorting out the shoes and coats.....any jobs the children can do. Give them individual support to have a go at these tasks. Use resources that support them and ensure they succeed.

<https://www.ncic.nhs.uk/services/childrens-therapy-toolkit>



Self-confidence and concentration

Hide and seek teddy. Start by hiding teddy in obvious places so that the children can find teddy easily. This will make them feel good. Make it harder to find him so they have to look for longer. They can hide from teddy while teddy, helped by you, looks for them.

<https://hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk/>



Self-identity and self-worth

Special bags for special things. Provide bags, baskets, boxes, anything where children will enjoy storing their special things. Toys from home can go out of sight in the special things from home basket. Talk about what is special to the children and why. Model using the bags and respecting others bags.

<https://www.earlylearninghq.org.uk/earlylearninghq-blog/the-leuven-well-being-and-involvement-scales/>



Self- confidence and a sense of security

Our day at nursery. Use a movable visual timetable to talk about your day and what will happen when. You can extend this as appropriate so that the children can add photographs to explain their world. For very anxious children you can draw an individual timetable with them and talk 1-1 about their feelings about the events of the day.

<https://early-education.org.uk/helping-children-cope-change>



Emotional well-being – Being physical active

Provide opportunities to explore, discover, climb and run, create an obstacle course, treasure hunt, provide materials for the children to make dens both indoors and outdoors.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/physical-activity-guidelines-children-under-five-years/>
<https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/activities/indoor-activities>
<https://www.nhs.uk/10-minute-shake-up/shake-ups>



Feel relaxed and feel at ease – Yoga and simple ways of stretching

Use gentle movements to encourage calm, improve concentration and focus, and promote health and wellbeing. Ensure children start with a warm up routine, before doing any yoga/stretches. This can be done for example, by gently shaking feet, legs, hips, arms, hands, shoulders and gently nodding the head. Remember children do not have to do the perfect pose and each child's pose may look different, the most important thing is that they are listening to how their bodies feel and are having FUN!



<https://www.nhs.uk/10-minute-shake-up/shake-ups/yoga-yak>

Regulate emotions and feel relaxed - Teach fun breathing techniques

Deep breathing has a physical effect on your body to help calm down and lower stress levels.

Belly breathing

1. Sit or lie flat in a comfortable position.
2. Put your hands or soft toy on your belly just below your ribs.
3. Take a deep breath in through your nose, and let your belly lift your hand/soft toy.
4. Breathe out through mouth and watch your soft toy go down.
5. Do this breathing 3 to 4 times.



Feelings- name them to tame them.

When children experience strong emotions, it's important for adults to support their efforts to calm down so they will be better able to talk about how they are feeling. Acknowledging it's ok to have these feelings and using story books, feelings games, and a feelings meter to teach how to self-regulate.



<https://early-education.org.uk/helping-children-their-behaviour>

Act spontaneously -Being creative

Encourage children to express their natural creativity both inside and outside. Have a range of opened-ended resource available this will give children the opportunity for engaging their imagination and enhancing their social and emotional intelligence.

<https://early-education.org.uk/children-artists>

Websites

Well-being

<https://www.earlylearninghq.org.uk/earlylearninghq-blog/the-leuven-well-being-and-involvement-scales/>

Physical activity

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/physical-activity-guidelines-children-under-five-years/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/activities/indoor-activities>

<https://www.nhs.uk/10-minute-shake-up/shake-ups>

Building relationships with families

<https://www.parentclub.scot/articles/play-talk-read>

<https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/.../homelearningandtimetogetherhomepage.asp>

Songs and rhymes, language games

<https://hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk/>

<https://ican.org.uk/>

Activities for all areas of development

<https://www.ncic.nhs.uk/services/childrens-therapy-toolkit>

<https://hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk/>

<https://early-education.org.uk/children-artists>

Self-regulation

<https://early-education.org.uk/helping-children-their-behaviour>

<https://early-education.org.uk/helping-children-cope-change>



Books

Mindfulness

- Mindful ideas booklet – Cumbria Learning Improvement Service, Early Years
- Imagine eating a lemon by Jason Rhodes and Richard Dearing
- The listening walk by Paul Showers
- Silence by Lemniscates
- Happy by Nicola Edwards and Katie Hickey.

Emotional Wellbeing and Self-esteem

- Red- a crayon story by Michael Hall
- Tough Guys Have feelings Too by Keith Negley
- Dear Girl by Amy Krouse Rosenthal and Paris Rosenthal
- Giraffe Problems by Jory John
- Don't Feed the Worry Bug by Andi Green
- The Lion inside by Rachel Bright
- What's My Superpower? By Aviaq Johnston
- I like myself by Karen Beaumont
- The Magic is inside you by Cathy Domoney
- The invisible string by Patrice Karst
- Only one you by Linda Kranz
- The Huge Bag of Worries by Virginia Ironside
- Giraffes Can't Dance by Giles Andreae and Guy Parker-Rees
- The little White Owl by Tracey Corderoy
- The Dot by Peter H Reynolds
- Tiny Whale a fishy tail by Joshua George
- The Girl that Never Made Mistakes by Mark Pett and Gary Rubinstein
- I Am Human by Susan Verde
- The Way I Feel by Janan Cain
- Lucy's Blue Day by Chris Duke
- The Colour Monster by Anna Llenas
- Have you filled a bucket today? by Carol McCloud

If you feel that a child or family needs extra support you could discuss with them the possibility of contacting your local Children's Centre or their local health services. For further information you could contact the Early Years Team.

